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# Town Meeting



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## How Can Our Schools Best Promote Democracy?

Moderator, JAMES MURRAY, JR.

*S p e a k e r s*

HOLLIS CASWELL

ROBERT SMITH

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**COMING**

—October 27, 1953—

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## How Can Our Schools Best Promote Democracy?



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### THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

**DR. ROBERT W. SMITH**—Visiting Professor of Philosophy, Bethel College, St. Paul, Minnesota. Dr. Smith graduated from Muskingum College in Ohio and also from Zenia Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh. He received a Th.D. from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. For six years Dr. Smith was chairman of the division of Philosophy, Psychology and Christian Education at Dubuque University. He is now visiting professor of philosophy at Bethel College, St. Paul, Minnesota. Dr. Smith was pastor of the United Presbyterian Congregational Church for ten years at Spring Hill, Indiana.

**DR. HOLLIS L. CASWELL**—Dean of Teachers College, Columbia University. Prior to becoming Dean of Teachers College in 1949, Dr. Caswell held various other positions in the college, including director of the Division of Instruction and director of Teachers College Schools and School Experimentation.

Dean Caswell's major professional interest is in the curriculum. He has written widely regarding problems of both elementary and secondary curriculum improvement in public school systems. For nine years he was associate director of the Division of Field Studies of George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tenn. In addition, he has directed curriculum surveys in several city school systems including Pittsburgh, Pa., Newark, N. J., Nashville, Tenn., Montclair, N. J., and St. Louis, Mo.

During the war, Dean Caswell served the War Department in the organization of the Pre-Induction Training Program. For a time he was acting chief of the Program Section. He also served as consultant to the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization on citizenship education. Following World War II, he made a study of the program of educational reform in Bavaria for the Army of Occupation.

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# How Can Our Schools Best Promote Democracy?

## Announcer:

Town Meeting greets you tonight from historic Park Street Church on the Boston Commons, where the program is a feature of the fifth annual Christian Education Conference, founded and directed by the Park Street Pastor, Dr. Harold J. Ockenga. The Conference is held for the purpose of acquainting the public with activities in the field of Christian education and fostering the exchange of ideas among churchmen, educators, and laymen.

Twenty-five schools and colleges are participating in this week-long conference. Its setting, the Park Street Church, was founded in 1809 on the site of the town granary, where the sails of the frigate *Constitution* were made. It was here that William Lloyd Garrison gave his first public address against slavery. Here, too, the song, *America*, was sung for the first time in 1832. And in 1849, here in Park Street Church, Charles Sumner delivered his great address entitled *The War System of the Nations*.

Park Street Church is especially proud of its wide missionary service, having 142 missionaries in the field. And now to preside as moderator for tonight's discussion here is the noted New York Attorney, international counsel and lecturer, James F. Murray, Jr., Mr. Murray.

## Mr. Murray:

Since the end of World War II, public attention in the United States has been focused with increasing emphasis upon the gravity of the problems which beset our nation's schools. The unexpected rise in the birth rate and population rate, the inadequacy of build-

ings and other facilities in many areas, the dangerous disproportion in teachers' salaries and benefits, these are but a few of the complex issues faced by every community.

Even more fundamental, however, is the problem of how best to prepare today's pupil to become tomorrow's citizen, in a world where not only the welfare of our own country but the hope of free people everywhere may depend very substantially upon the success with which the principles of democracy, humanity, and brotherhood are instilled in 10,000 classrooms during these days of crisis.

Our topic tonight: "How Can Our Schools Best Promote Democracy?" seeks the answer to this vexing question. Does the solution lie, as certain educators have asserted, in seeking to unite in public secondary schools the primary students attending both public and independent schools, or is it to be found, for example, in increasing the stress of the moral and spiritual values in our schools and in our educational systems? Can we reconcile these points of view and march forward united to an even more intensely fruitful development in our democratic process?

Originating at historic Park Street Church in Boston, during the opening session of the Christian Education Conference, Town Meeting of the Air tonight presents two points of view on this basic and interesting problem. Our first speaker is Dr. Hollis L. Caswell, Dean of Teachers College, Columbia University. He has been Dean at Columbia University's Teachers College since 1949. Dean Caswell's major professional interest is in the curriculum.



He has written widely regarding problems of both elementary and secondary curriculum improvement in public school systems. He has also had extended direct experience in advising school systems. He served as consultant to a considerable number of state departments of education and city school systems. He has been chairman of the advisory editorial board of the World Book Encyclopedia for several years. And following World War II, he made a study of the program of educational reform in Bavaria, with the United States Army of Occupation. Welcome to Town Meeting of the Air, Doctor Hollis L. Caswell.

**Dr. Caswell:**

Mr. Murray and ladies and gentlemen, the topic for tonight, we can all see very readily, is an exceedingly complex one. We can approach it from a great many different angles. Now I have decided to open up with you one issue, in particular, that I think is of special importance. The great men who founded our country, we all know, recognized the importance of widespread education. They emphasized this again and again in their writing and in their speaking, but it wasn't for more than a half century after the Declaration of Independence that education came to be at all widespread.

At that time, the states began to establish state-wide systems of public schools and, in the years following that, children from all types of economic and religious and social backgrounds attended the public schools. With millions of immigrants coming into this country, it became evident in those years that the public school was our most powerful agency in achieving democratic values and national unity.

Our great success in America in avoiding the extremes of religious persecution and class stratification, which were so common in European countries, has resulted I think to no small extent from the understanding and the opportunities gained in the public schools of America through those years. The public schools, however, could serve this great function of fostering national unity and devotion to common ideals so effectively only because the great majority of children attended them.

Although parents have always been free to send their children to private schools if they wished, only a few have done so until recently. But the situation at the present time is changing. Private school enrollments are increasing at a much higher rate than those in public schools, and in some cities in America today approximately half of the pupils are in private schools—half in public, half in private. And this points up what I believe is the most basic issue of all: Can a dual school system, that involves major divisions among the people along social and religious lines, preserve and advance our democratic values in the future, as has been done in the past by the public schools, which served the great majority of the people, with children coming from families of all types of social and religious backgrounds?

That is the issue, I think. Americans should become aware that in many sections of our country we are moving sharply away from our tradition of the past century. We are headed in the direction of a tradition that has been dominant in many European countries. In our small community in Germany, you can see there a single school building, a not very large school building,

ing, which houses three different elementary schools, all serving the same neighborhood—two parochial schools and one state school. The children come in different entrances to those schools and they go their separate ways. They do not even play together. Now every society throughout history that has sought to maintain social classes or groups with distinctly different cultural backgrounds has used a dual school system to achieve those purposes—every last one.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my belief that the first and essential requirement in keeping the schools strong in teaching American democracy is to hold fast to our tradition of the past century. We need common schools attended by the great majority of the children, including those from *all* economic, social, and religious backgrounds. We need schools that are community centers, building respect for *all* people, providing an open road of opportunity to every youth, and teaching democratic values through the actual living of the pupils together. (*Applause*)

**Mr. Murray:**

Thank you very much, Dean Caswell. And now as our second guest for this evening, Dr. W. Robert Smith, Professor of Philosophy at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Dr. Smith began his experience with ten years of parish work as an ordained minister in Indiana and Illinois. He subsequently instructed at Monmouth College in Monmouth, Illinois. He became Chairman of the Division of Humanities at Duquesne University in Duquesne, Iowa, and presently is Professor of Philosophy at Bethel College, St. Paul, Minnesota. Welcome to Town Meeting of the Air, Dr. W. Robert Smith.

**Dr. Smith:**

Thank you, Mr. Murray. Education is essential to democracy, but not just *any* education. Men can be educated to support the opposite of what we believe to be democracy. What type of education, then, is a basic matter. Just any education will not do. The education that would best promote democracy, not only as an existing political and social pattern but as a dynamic process of change and adjustment to the changing circumstances of the world in which we live, must be geared to that end.

Every new generation needs to understand the democratic process and ideals; to be able to think and make critical judgments and evaluations of the status quo in light of ideals yet to be attained; to appreciate the roots of our culture, and to be vigilant in guarding against encroachments; and further, to be willing to assume these responsibilities and duties as citizens in a free society. Democracy, as we understand it in America, is rooted and grounded in religious convictions out of which it grew, and it rests on a moral and spiritual foundation.

Education which fails to develop citizens with an understanding of and a commitment to these basic moral principles is doomed to fail in face of our world situation. Democratic values are grounded in the centrality of God as Creator and Protector and Preserver of all human rights and duties within the fundamental moral law. The crux of the problem, as to how our schools can best promote democracy, seems to me to be, how can our schools best keep alive this moral and spiritual foundation under God? Our public schools and colleges are not at liberty to teach sectarian dogma, or the beliefs



which are particular or peculiar to any one church. But God is not the president of a sect, and the common heritage of our Hebrew Christian culture is not sectarian.

Our public schools must strive to establish a foundation in these areas if democracy is to survive today's attack. Because in the minds of some, this is not being done adequately in tax supported schools, either because our public school system, statewide, is not permitted, in the minds of some, to so educate; or because of other reasons, there has arisen in our time an increasing number of non-state supported schools—private, parochial and co-operative Christian schools, both primary and secondary, as well as college.

Religion is the basis of any education, they say, and more than knowledge and understanding is needed. Commitment is essential. In the Conference, of which this particular meeting is a part, we believe in Christian schools, and they say that Christ is the answer to all our problems. It is not enough to teach man what he should do, but he has to have a commitment, and it is necessary that the power of God enable him. Commitment to Him is imperative.

Open free education to all, we must preserve; but moral foundations must be maintained. Christian schools, together with other non-tax supported institutions, strive to do this. They also furnish the public school a challenge to self-examination, and protect against state and community authoritarianism, or pressure for uniformity and conformity. (*Applause*)

**Mr. Murray:** Thank you, Dr. W. Robert Smith. Gentlemen, in the light of the opening statements

which you both made, it seems that perhaps we should initiate our general exchange of views by posing this question to you: What do you both feel to be the essential elements of a democratic education as a matter of definition? Dean, would you care to open the discussion on that?

**Dean Caswell:** I think that is an excellent question, Mr. Murray, and it is a very penetrating question, if you really dig into it. It is something you cannot answer finally and conclusively at any time; it is a question that we must study constantly. But in my own thinking I believe that those great documents of ours, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and particularly the Preamble of the Constitution, give a very good indication of the essentials of the democratic concept.

I can go back to those documents and to certain other of our great documents and I can find, I believe, central ideas that give meaning and significance to this democratic concept. I think, for example, this concept of equality—all men are created equal—that is a wonderful and a great idea. It takes new interpretations every year, but it is a basic conception, I think, in the notion of democracy. That has influenced education tremendously, because that has led us to say that every boy and every girl in America should have an opportunity to develop himself to the fullest possible extent in terms of his abilities and capacities.

I go on down further, and I see life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and I see such statements as government by the people and government for the people, and I think it is in those great documents that we really get the conception that leads to what

democracy means. If we will keep reinterpreting those basic ideas and then bring them down into the educational problems, Mr. Murray, I think we are on the right track.

**Mr. Murray:** Dr. Smith, do you have a point of view on that?

**Dr. Smith:** I think that in our educational systems democracy means a process by which we adjust to the ideal. It means, in political science, a certain type of government whereby we respect and preserve the rights and privileges and opportunities and freedoms of the individual, and at the same time try to instruct the individual how and why, and give force to the idea of responsibilities and duties.

In the democratic ideal, I do not think we can lose sight of the grounding both in the Constitution and others of all the human freedoms and privileges which we have, as Dean Caswell has mentioned. We are created equal and we cannot forget the One who created us. All human values in a democratic society are grounded in the fact that we cannot take from one another privileges which we neither gave nor have a right to take away, as they are given of God and we have their preservation and protection under Him.

**Mr. Murray:** Well, it certainly seems that the lines are being drawn in this discussion this evening, and I think, Dean Caswell, that perhaps we really should penetrate into your opening statement by asking this question, which then, Dr. Smith, you may wish to develop. Do you, Dean Caswell, imply that the democratic process can best be promoted in the United States by excluding independent schools altogether, and limiting our education to your concept of public school systems?

**Dean Caswell:** Well, I think the Moderator has driven right down into the heart of the question, and to a very difficult aspect of it, but I believe that it can be answered very directly, too. I would say categorically, no. I would not support for a minute a plan which, under law by enactment of legislation, said there should not be private schools. I think that would defeat the very thing that we are after. I think it would invade the freedom of conscience and belief of our people, which is the thing we want to preserve.

So I don't mean that, but I do believe, on the other hand, that it is a matter of wisdom, how people are making judgments. And it seems to me so very important in achieving national unity, in developing understanding of peoples of various religious beliefs and backgrounds, in getting this continuation of power and understanding and acceptance and the rest, it is so very important that children from different religious, economic, and social backgrounds come together and come to understand each other because they are friends, because they know each other.

And so I should express the hope that while we would never, never by law, say that parents, who believe that their children should have an education that is tied fully and completely with religion, could not do it. We would never do that. Nevertheless, I would hope that parents would decide that there are other values here, and that at least a portion of the education of their children in the elementary and the secondary school would be in a public school, where they met youngsters from other religious and economic and social backgrounds. I think that is of critical importance.



**Mr. Smith:** I think the assumption Dean Caswell is making is that our public school systems of necessity do have unity. I don't know that that could be substantiated. We are all agreed that the public schools, in the sense of state supported schools—because many of our non-state supported schools are public in the sense that anybody can attend—have done a great deal in amelioration and in alleviation of tensions and conflicts.

On the other hand, in our public schools there are many areas where you do not have this so-called unity. In a rural area, you do not have the economic classes which you would have in an urban area; they are mostly all farmers. In a certain area in a great city, you would have those usually of one social stratification. In any one public school, you do not have necessarily all the classes of economics, religion, and stratification in society. Another assumption would seem to be that in a school, which is non-tax supported that you have divisiveness.

Many of our parochial schools would have groups from every stage of life—high and low, backgrounds of various races and cultures and classes. That would be true also in our so-called church related colleges and our Christian colleges. I think that the unity is not necessarily the best end. We want unity, but do not want necessarily that type of unity. You can have unity for evil purposes. You had unity in the educational systems in Germany and you had them in Russia. To what end?

I think far more basic in its importance than so-called uniformity, in that we are all educated in the same building and in the same geographic location, is that we need to preserve these moral and

spiritual foundations, which educators and our citizenry at best are saying we have not done in recent years.

**Dean Caswell:** I think Dr. Smith has covered so many points it is a little difficult to know just which one to pick up. But this I should say: America is not without direction. America is not without purpose, and it is because of the very nature of the purposes that we have that a common school attended by youngsters from all types of backgrounds is so important. That is, we do not want class structure. We do not want a situation as we have in so many European countries in which classes come to be strongly developed. We do not want a situation in which religious groups fail to develop understanding and appreciation of each other and tolerance for differing religious beliefs.

We want quite the contrary. There are very definite goals—goals of tolerance and understanding and respect for personality and the beliefs of others. And I believe that the most powerful agent in achieving those very positive and important goals is having young people and children have an opportunity to live together and to come to understand each other.

Take that German school situation that I pictured. Coming there, going in three different doors, never having any opportunity to live and play together, I think that is divisive. I think it defeats the kind of goals that we are concerned with. I would agree exactly with Dr. Smith that just having a public school doesn't solve the problem by any means, but a public school trying to achieve the purposes we are seeking to achieve, I think is a very essential thing.

**Dr. Smith:** I think Dean Caswell in many points is right, that we



are striving for these goals of unity and freedom from intolerance. The question is whether or not that is going to be best accomplished by a single public school system, which I do not necessarily believe. I believe that the non-tax supported school challenges our public schools to be on their toes. It does avoid statism, as Dr. Wilson, who happens to be the head of the Indiana Standard Oil Corporation, said at the inaugural of a president of a university a short time ago. He said that our private schools will prevent any statism and any uniformity by the state, and if we only had one system of education, you were always involved in that problem.

I think likewise this matter of unity and lack of tolerance is a basic Christian belief. In our Christian schools and in our schools which are non-tax supported, we can teach the basic principles under God, of humanity and thought for our fellow man. There is no philosophy in the history of mankind that has done it so much as a real commitment to Christ and the Christian philosophy that we should love our neighbor as ourself, that no man has any standing before God, except as he is a sinful individual and by the grace of God he is what he is.

**Mr. Murray:** Gentlemen, each week we invite our listeners to submit questions pertinent to the topic under discussion. The listener whose question is used on the air will receive a beautifully bound twenty-volume set of the American People's Encyclopedia. Tonight, Edward T. Lies, Tucson, Arizona, will receive the American People's Encyclopedia for sending us the following question: "What fundamental ideas should be included in the concept of democracy

instilled in the minds of our children?" Which one of you cares to volunteer the first answer? Dr. Smith?

**Dr. Smith:** Well, I think there are many ideas, but the consensus of opinion of many in our day is that we are not doing it. Our educators, our national councils of education, in our schools of philosophy, and in the public, we are saying we are not accomplishing it. It is more than inculcation of an idea; it is the ability to do what we ought to do, and we are not doing that. Today, we have gone far from the task.

It ought to be clear that our greatest single effort should be in the spiritual area and that the democratic ideas are grounded in these fundamental ideas of the sovereignty of God, human cupidity, human finitude, and that no one man has the answer. There must be free and open discussion, not merely of our rights and privileges and freedoms, which we hear so much of in our day, but of obligations and responsibilities, of honesty and integrity, and moral social conscience.

**Dean Caswell:** Ladies and gentlemen, I hear a great deal today about the failure of the public schools. I have visited a lot of public schools, I have worked with an awful lot of public schools, and I would say to you that I think the public schools can do a far better job than they are doing. I think any agency can do a better job, but I think the public schools have done a perfectly amazing and wonderful job for America. If you look back over the past century, from 1850 to 1950, and see what the public schools have done and what would have happened to this country if we hadn't had them, I

think they have done a perfectly amazing job.

Now with regard to this question more specifically, the public school people of this country are really working very hard to get a more adequate interpretation of basic moral and spiritual values into the program of the schools. That is a difficult thing to do, to get it where it really gets down into the living of youngsters. But one of the most important documents that has been prepared by any group in American education in recent years is a document prepared by the Educational Policies Commission on Moral and Spiritual Values in Public Education. That document is being used all over this country.

You can go from one school system to another and you can find groups of teachers at work on this difficult problem. I think the schools of this country have done a tremendous lot in interpreting basic moral and spiritual values, and I must say that I have a bit of a feeling, if Dr. Smith will permit me, that some of the criticisms that are leveled at the public schools today are, well, just in the spirit of times past, in general.

Let me read you an editorial here—just a brief editorial, a little quotation from it: "When we were boys" (this is on a slightly different aspect of it) this editorial says, "boys had to do a little work in school. They were not coaxed; they were hammered. Spelling, writing and arithmetic were not electives and you had to learn. In these more fortunate times, elementary education has become in many places a vaudeville show. The child must be kept amused, and learns what he pleases. Many sage teachers scorn the old-fashioned

rudiments, and it seems to be regarded as between a misfortune and a crime for a child to learn to read."

This was an editorial in the *New York Sun* on October 5, 1902—fifty-one years ago. So I think that it is a popular pastime, frankly, to criticize the public schools. That doesn't mean that criticism isn't necessary and important, but I believe it does mean that we need to ask pretty hard, what is the basis of the criticism and what evidence do we have? I would turn to Dr. Smith, and say, Dr. Smith, what real evidence do you have to underlie the statements that you just made?

**Mr. Murray:** Now to Dr. Smith, who is anxious to answer the question posed to him by Dean Caswell.

**Dr. Smith:** Dean Caswell, I think that many of us are aware of the situation in which we find ourselves—our government corruption, our juvenile delinquency, all of which is not to be laid at the foot of the public school. It is true that our churches and our homes and our schools together have failed, but when you become specific with reference to public schools, the Religious Education Association of America, which includes various groups—Unitarians and Jews and Protestants and Catholics—recently made an inquiry addressed to the state superintendents of the states of America on what they were doing positively and exactly in order to give grounding in this moral and spiritual area.

Ten superintendents made no reply. These were state superintendents of instruction; sixteen said they had no plans underway or in contemplation for the systematic development of moral and spirit-

ual values in the schools. I have the states here but I shan't read them. Four states had no system, but expressed a deep concern, and there were 18 states which said they had more or less some specific programs for developing moral and spiritual principles and foundations, of which one was, for example, mental health. One was release time, another temperance education and good citizenship. And these state superintendents of instruction themselves said that

they had no specific plan, for the most part.

**Mr. Murray:** Gentlemen, we have come now to the most stimulating portion of Town Meeting of the Air, and that is questions from the audience. There have been an enormous number of questions raised. I have seen hands all over. We will begin at once with the gentleman on my left. Would you tell us for whom you have a question, please?

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## QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

*Questioner:* I have a question for Dean Caswell. Sir, since our public schools are constantly preaching such theories as evolution, which are incompatible with Christianity, why should we send our children to these schools which are undermining our convictions?

*Mr. Murray:* Dean Caswell, would you care to answer that?

*Dean Caswell:* It seems to me that it is important in a field like science for the American people to have access to the best that the most competent scientists in this country have to tell us. That is the essence of education. It is to consider what in any particular field the most competent scholars have to say in that field. If, by reason of your particular beliefs, you are going to shut off the possibility of even considering what scholars have to say in their various fields, then you are going to condemn America to ignorance and to a mere perpetuation of the folkways and the folklore of our country as it stands at the present time.

*Dr. Smith:* As a professor of

philosophy, may I interject that while evolution is taught as science many times, those of us who are in the field of philosophy say that it is not science; it is a philosophy of science, which is distinctly different. And if we can teach the philosophy of evolution, to which I do not object, because in the courses of philosophy I have to deal with it, and that is a philosophical interpretation of these facts, why can we not teach the philosophy, theism, which is the creativity of God?

*Mr. Murray:* Gentlemen, I would like to prolong your comments, but may we go on to another question from the gentleman on my left?

*Questioner:* I would like to ask a question of Dr. Smith. Dr. Smith, if we reintroduce religion to education does that throw us into the educational arms of Romanism and necessitate tax support for religious schools, or should religious education be confined to privately supported schools?

*Dr. Smith:* We have so believed in the past that church supported schools or sectarian schools should



not be supported by the state, and I think that is still a basic principle on which most of us operate, although as a professor of logic I think we ought to scrutinize that in this sense.

While we cannot pay for the bus transportation of children to parochial schools or to church supported schools, we do pay for their lunches; and while we will not permit the payment of tuition to church supported schools in the twelfth grade, when they get to the thirteenth grade then in our GI bills, our government has paid the total tuition. They have paid all for their books and their food and everything, and many times as a professor of logic I think we ought to scrutinize these basic principles and come up with something that is at least positive and consistent.

*Mr. Murray:* For the benefit of our radio audience that last question was posed by Dr. Harold J. Ockenga, the pastor of the Park Street Church, where we have our meeting here tonight. Dean, did you have a comment on that?

*Dean Caswell:* Since Dr. Smith made a short comment following my answer to a question, may I make one following his? I think the illustrations that he gives show that the American people are no longer as sensitive to this problem of separation of church and state as they once were, and that it is time that we review our history pretty carefully, and that we ask ourselves, at what point does government coming in endanger religious freedom and a full and free operation of churches in this country?

*Mr. Murray:* The next question from the audience, please.

*Questioner:* My question is to Dean Caswell. If our democratic

form of government is founded upon Christian principles as set forth in the Scripture, how can any educational system, public or private, adequately educate citizens for their place in society without inculcating in them a personal relationship with God, the author of our social system?

*Dean Caswell:* It seems to me that the way the public school system of this country has developed over the past hundred years demonstrates that there are certain basic moral and spiritual values which the public schools can inculcate, and which the church and the home can build on and with, and develop a rounded program of education for the youngster, including his religious education and his general education in a rounded over-all adequate program of education. I think that has been demonstrated through the past hundred years of public education in this country.

*Questioner:* Dr. Smith, do you feel that this increase in private schools, which Dean Caswell himself called our attention to, indicates growing public recognition of a basic weakness and failure in public education, as it has been developed and formulated by its leaders during the last thirty-five to fifty years?

*Dr. Smith:* I do not think that is the only reason, but I think that is a basic reason. Here is a word from Dr. Trueblood. He is a professor of philosophy; he was at Stanford University. Dr. Trueblood senses the pulse of our America because he travels widely.

He says: "How far we are from doing this spiritual reconstruction job in education is obvious. In our public schools, we teach our children many things about our modern world, such as our system

of manufacture and distribution, but we make almost no effort to give them a living knowledge of the spiritual sources of our civilization. We deliberately cut off from them their heritage. In America, we actually work in many states on the preposterous theory that it is illegal to teach our children the faith on which our democracy rests."

*Questioner:* My question is to Dr. Caswell, who mentioned that there was a falling away of attendance in the public schools. My question is, do you not believe that restoring Bible reading to the public schools would necessarily bring back the majority of children to these public schools?

*Dean Caswell:* I do not believe it is that simple. I think the factors underlying the present situation are very much more complex than that. I think the American people are going to have to look at this trend which is occurring. I would like to say to you again, I think we are headed in the direction of a European tradition which was rejected a hundred years ago, and that we had better examine that tradition very hard before we embrace it and see whether the educational and religious life in the countries that have followed that tradition is any more vital and significant than it is in America today.

If you look at the facts, the religious life of America is a pretty vital and alive sort of thing today just as our educational life is, too, and I think we had better make some comparisons before we embrace that other tradition.

*Mr. Murray:* I think we may have time for one more question.

*Questioner:* Dr. Smith, if the home and church do their part in teaching Christian truths and ideals, do you think Christian schools would still be necessary? And is it right for home and church to pass the buck to the schools?

*Mr. Smith:* I do not think so. I think the basic problem of education is in the home, but there are so many children who are not in religious education of any sort, and I think in addition to our schools we need release-time Christian education and we need to gain the moral foundations in our public schools, because they are not being educated in their homes and in their churches.

*Mr. Murray:* Thank you very much, Dean Hollis L. Caswell and Dr. W. Robert Smith. Our thanks this evening in addition go to Dr. Harold J. Ockenga, pastor of the Park Street Church here in Boston, and to the officials of the Christian Education Conference.



# FOR FURTHER STUDY OF THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

## Background Questions

### PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS—WHICH BEST PROMOTES DEMOCRACY?

1. What are the essential elements of a democratic education?
  - a. Are religion and democracy necessarily bound up together? If so, is democracy primarily concerned with ethics or dogma?
  - b. Are the presuppositions of democracy a set of values (regarding human life, freedom, etc.) common to many religions and independent of any particular theology?
  - c. Does democracy imply a way of life fostered by promoting certain types of human relationships?
  - d. Is democracy a set of principles that can be taught independent of experience?
2. "If one accepts the ideal of a democratic fluid society . . . then the ideal secondary school is a comprehensive public high school." "The greater the proportion of our youth who attend independent schools, the greater the threat to our democratic unity." In these statements (taken from his speech before the American Assn. of School Adm. in 1952) James B. Conant stated the case against the growth of private schools. Do you agree?
  - a. Is a public school inherently democratic? Has this been true of schools in the Soviet Union?
  - b. Is any school conducted under private auspices by definition undemocratic? Or, can private schools afford to give more time to the development of the individual personality?
  - c. Is the right to maintain independent schools important to democracy?
3. What sort of unity is democratic unity? What kind of diversity can a democracy tolerate and promote?
  - a. Mr. Conant accepts the basic premise that in our American society some social integration is necessary in each generation. Do you agree?
  - b. He also believes that the secondary school level is the best level for inculcation through experience of social attitudes important to democracy. Do you agree?
  - c. What kinds of unity and diversity are most characteristic of American democracy—religious, class (economic and social), political?
  - d. Has public school education fostered religious or political homogeneity? Has it enhanced economic fluidity?
  - e. Are private schools divisive in that they separate young people along religious and class lines? If so, is this type of divisiveness detrimental to democracy?
  - f. Has the growth of private schools within recent years been a response to poor academic standards in public schools? Or, has it been motivated by economic and religious separatism?
4. Evaluate the argument of those who claim that the public school system being state-owned fosters statism.
5. Does the local control of education in this country described and



advocated by Mr. Conant ensure a diversity of approaches to educational problems?

6. Do you favor the increase in the number and scope of private schools? public schools? both?
7. Can a dual system of education, including both private and public schools, serve democracy by providing competing standards in academic and social performance?

## SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1. Evaluate the fact that much of the private versus public school controversy centers about the relative merits of secular and religious education.
2. Is it correct to equate secularism with godlessness? with communism?
3. Is a non-religious school necessarily anti-religious? Does primary responsibility for the inculcation of religious beliefs rest with the home, church or school?
4. What are the basic differences between education and indoctrination?
  - a. Can religious beliefs be taught in the same sense that other knowledge is?
  - b. Does religious training include the opportunity for students critically to examine and discuss all dogma? Or, must they be accepted on faith?

## RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1. Since the United States has no established church, should our public schools be prepared to serve all creeds?
2. Evaluate the contention that tax-supported public schools are not concerned with moral and spiritual values.
3. Should the public schools teach religious beliefs? If so, whose?
4. If religious materials are introduced into the school curriculum, should they be subjected to critical examination?
5. Evaluate the controversy over the "released time" program. The minority opinion on the Supreme Court claimed that the states' compulsory education power was being abused by this program. Do you agree?
6. Should people who favor private religious and secular schools seek or accept membership on public boards of education?

## FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION

1. Do you favor a program of federal aid to education? Or, do you believe it fosters overcentralization of our school system?
2. Do you favor government aid either directly or indirectly, for the support of private secular or religious schools?
3. Evaluate the argument that granting federal funds to private schools for auxiliary services, e.g. lunches, bus service, textbooks, constitutes a violation of the Bill of Rights.
4. Can health and welfare arguments be extended to cover building costs (heat and lighting, safety features) and teachers salaries (mental health aspects) etc.?



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